

## searching far and wide by jaylene

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**Summary:**

Something strange is going on in Hawkins.

## searching far and wide

### Author's Note:

- For [moor](#).

this one's for moor.

Something strange is going on in Hawkins.

Mike can feel it in his bones, like the day Will disappeared only a few weeks ago. A shiver runs down his spine before he roughly shakes his head, grabs his walkie-talkie, and heads downstairs.

Nancy is unusually subdued as well, though Mike guesses it could just be one of those days. Ever since she lost Barb, Nancy is prone to fits of melancholy and introspection. Mike meets her eyes briefly as he grabs a couple waffles and nods.

Nancy smiles back at him, wan but there. She looks down at the waffles in his hand, smirks, and presses a few more toward him. "She'll appreciate it," she says with a wink.

Mike laughs, saluting her and heading out to hop on his bike. The crisp bite of winter is melting away into spring and he greatly appreciates it. Not just for himself, but for Eleven.

He grins, anticipation thrumming through him as he maneuvers the bike over the more difficult terrain off the beaten path. Light streams through the leaves of the looming trees and Mike makes his way deeper and deeper into the forest.

"Eleven," he calls softly, pedaling forward. She moves around a good bit, never settling in a single place (though he knows that she has stayed with Hopper a few times) for long. "Eleven?"

Rustling greets him.

He stops, jumping off his bike. That feeling of strangeness is still there as he waits for Eleven to emerge.

What greets him is...a dinosaur?

It is orange and stares up at him with bright green eyes. Upon its tail is a flame.

Mike stumbles back and trips, dropping the waffles and the walkie-talkie. He watches, frightened, as the beast waddles forward, ignoring the walkie-talkie entirely as it goes to sniff the waffles. It releases a happy noise, before digging into the delicious Eggo goodness.

"H-hey!" Mike says, sitting up. Now that he knows that the dinosaur doesn't seem to be interested in injuring him, he's a bit angry. "C'mon now! Those aren't for you!"

The beast looks up and glares at him. "Char!" it says before breathing *fire* at him.

Admittedly, it is barely more than a spark, but it is enough to make Mike wary again. He raises his hands and scoots away. "Fine, it's yours."

"Mike?"

Gratitude wells in Mike as he tilts his head up to meet Eleven's quizzical gaze. He scrambles to his feet, keeping himself between Eleven and the creature. Eleven is looking at the beast, eyes narrowed in on the Eggos. Mike is a bit worried a fight is at hand.

"I'm glad you're here," Mike says, tentatively taking her hand.

Eleven doesn't even seem to notice as she stares intently at the animal. "Charmander," she says finally. "Charmander is friend to Mike."

"Charmander?" Mike asks. "Is that the dinosaur?" Eleven shrugs. "He's my friend?" Eleven nods. "*Why?*"

"He likes Eggos."

Eggos seem to be a constant interest for all paranormal creatures.

"*Guys? Over.*"

Mike and Charmander jump. Mike skirts Charmander and pounces on the walkie-talkie. Charmander doesn't seem interested.

"What is it Dustin? Over."

*"There's a...there's a plant thing in my room. It's freaking me out! Over."*

Mike glances askance at Eleven. "Is this one of these...things? Like Charmander?"

"Pokémon," Eleven says. "Upside Down."

"They come from the Upside Down?" Mike hisses, moving away from Charmander as if scalded. "Are they *safe*?"

Eleven doesn't respond for a long moment. "Won't hurt you."

"Will they hurt Dustin?"

"No," Eleven says. "Need to meet."

The walkie-talkie is still crackling with fierce conversation among Will, Lucas, and Dustin. "Guys!" Mike shouts into the talkie. "Guys, listen up! Meet at Dustin's. Over."

Mike eyes Charmander as everyone agrees. It has finished eating and looks up at him expectantly. Mike turns with pleading eyes to Eleven. She doesn't take pity on him, instead gazing up into the trees. Her nose doesn't bleed, but it seems like she's speaking with someone.

...Or something.

"Is there...is there another one out here?" Mike whispers, flinching as Charmander grabs onto his leg. As it doesn't really do anything, Mike leaves it alone.

Eleven nods, turning to look at the other side of the forest.

"Are there more than one out here?"

Again, she nods, a smile on her face.

"Can I meet it?" Eleven converses telepathically with them before

holding up a finger. “Only one?”

“Yes,” Eleven says, as the air next to her shimmers. Mike blinks as a ball of pink energy manifests next to her. As the ball dissipates, he sees a small pink furred creature that looks somewhat like a giant mouse. She blinks big blue eyes his way, cocking her head as her tail sways to and fro. “This is Mew.”

Mike waves at it, still shocked by its appearance. Mew giggles, flipping over and going to nuzzle Eleven’s short hair. Eleven picks up the discarded Eggo, brushing it off, and passing it to Mew.

“Okay,” Mike says, running a hand over his face. “Okay. So, we’ll definitely need a disguise.”

“A wig?” Eleven asks, thinking of the blonde hair and pink dress.

Mike smiles. “Not quite.”

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Eleven gently tucks Mew into her backpack, brushing a hand over the warm knit hat placed on her head. Mew presses her muzzle into Eleven’s hand for a moment before snuggling down into the bag. Eleven smiles, pressing a half-eaten waffle into Mew’s paws before pulling the cover over the knapsack. She doesn’t like putting Mew in a bag like this; it reminds her too much of the sterile cage she was kept in, where Father made her live...

She shakes off the thought as she quietly follows Mike into the basement. He rummages through the chest of dress-up clothes, shaking out a few options before sighing. “It’d probably be best to get some of Holly’s clothes, a hat maybe. Mew is pink and all...maybe we could grab a jumper and pass her off as a doll?”

Eleven shrugs, not really caring one way or another. Her thoughts are connected with Mew’s, glad that she is enjoying the Eggo. It is good to have connections out in the wilderness, companionship. And her Pokémon friends make for the *best* companions.

She waits downstairs as Mike veritably bounds away, promising to

return in a few moments. She is fine, after all, she is not alone.

Eleven closes her eyes, listening to the voices in her head, one chiming like a bell, the other deep and soothing.

Soon, everyone will know.

Soon, all the bonds will be made.

But first she needs to explain to those who were chosen.

Mike comes back quickly, pressing a spring green knit hat into her hands as well as a blue onesie. "Will this work?"

Eleven nods, gently removing Mew and setting the hat upon her head as Mew, with both her paws and telekinesis, puts on the onesie. Eleven presses a question to Mew which is answered with bubbling joy.

Mew likes the clothes, though their other companion finds them silly.

Eleven notices Mike trying to hide his laughter but she doesn't care. As long as Mew is happy, so is she. "Mike," she says with a frown.

"Yeah?" he asks, sifting through his bags in the search for the most flame-retardant one.

"Nancy too."

"Really? She hasn't said anything."

"Not yet," Eleven replies. "Soon."

"I'll go get her then," Mike says. "Anyone else?"

"Jonathan," Eleven says with a decisive. "Others later. Joyce. Hopper. Not today."

"Okay," Mike says. "Go ahead and head outside and wait out there with Charmander. I'd really rather not have Nancy screaming her head off in here."

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As it turns out, Nancy does *not* scream when the Pokémon are revealed to her. She goes a little pale, her eyes go a little wide, but other than saying, “Oh,” she doesn’t really have a reaction.

She can tell they don’t seem to intend any harm, at least not to Mike and Eleven and really that’s all that matters to her at the moment.

Nancy knows that she should probably be more surprised but honestly, after the year she’s had, this is rather low on her list of weirdness. Little creatures exist outside the known realm of zoology? Some even have phenomenal powers? No big deal.

They reach Dustin’s house and Nancy blinks as she is faced with all of Mike’s friends along with Jonathan. Dustin seems to be wrestling with a green creature, Lucas is soaking wet and glaring down at what appears to be a blue turtle, Will serenely holds a large yellow mouse, and Jonathan holds a blue seahorse the size of his fist.

“Huh,” she says before smiling. “Not exactly a typical day here is it? This seem anything like your uh...dungeons game?”

“*Dungeons and Dragons*,” Dustin says reverently. “Not quite.”

“Too outlandish,” Lucas says, eyeing the turtle with heavy suspicion before looking at the creature in Eleven’s arms. “Should have known you’d be involved.”

“When did you and Will get Pokémon?” Mike asks. “Only Dustin had one when we were talking on the radio.”

“I was ambushed by this *thing* on the way over,” Lucas says, arms crossed. “We do *not* get along.”

Eleven shakes her head. “Bonded.”

“What does that mean?” Lucas asks, frustration clear in his face.

Eleven struggles for a moment and Mike can tell she’s communicating with Mew and probably the other one. “Friends,” she finally says, voice soft and giving weight to the word.

Lucas immediately softens, knowing what it means to Eleven. “Oh. Why does it keep spraying me?”

“She,” Eleven corrects and then shrugs. “Teasing?”

Dustin snickers at that and stops wrangling the green creature. “What’s the name of mine?”

“Called Bulbasaur,” Eleven replies. “But willing to take on new name.”

“Really?” Dustin says, eyes alight with all the possibilities.

Nancy sidles over to Jonathan, gazing at the seahorse in his hands with curiosity.

“I, uh, think it’s called Horsea,” Jonathan says, looking chagrined. “At least, that’s what it keeps repeating.”

“Horsea,” Nancy says, reaching out to touch it.

Horsea squeals and releases a spray of water right into Nancy’s face. Nancy sputters, wiping at her face as the rest of the group laughs.

The laughter dies, however, as a large blue serpent streaks out in front of Nancy, flaring the wings on its head protectively as it stares down at Jonathan. He meets its large, liquid eyes with a gulp, turning slightly to protect his small friend. His eyes screw shut as the creature releases a cry of anger.

Eleven is suddenly in front of him, hands up and out, trying to calm the Pokémon. It reminds Jonathan of a horse handler, staring down a powerful beast with an air of peaceful tranquility. Her Pokémon floats beside her, watching the snake one intently.

“Dratini no,” Eleven says aloud as her nose begins to bleed.

Dratini is surrounded by purple energy and lifted away from Eleven as a being blinks into existence beside her. It is humanoid in shape, sleek and contoured in shades of grey and purple. It glares at Dratini as if personally insulted.



Jonathan bites back a shout as Eleven wraps her arms around this obviously powerful Pokémon, waiting for the worst.

It doesn't come.

Instead Dratini is placed beside Nancy where it butts its head against hers, tail wrapping loosely around her legs. The newcomer turns to the group, hand resting on Eleven's shoulder.

*I am Mewtwo*, it, rather he, greets telepathically. *I am a friend of El.*

"You...you talk!" Dustin exclaims, squeezing Bulbasaur close.

*Indeed*, he replies drily. *We come from In Between the Upside Down... Sideways if you will. This is not our world but we find ourselves inevitably tethered here.* He looks to Eleven. *Those beside you are Bonded to you and they will be your friends for life.* He closes his eyes. *I will allow them to introduce themselves in this space now.*

The being falls silent, concentrating as each Bonded pair begins private conversation. Eleven watches it all with satisfaction, glad to see them begin to act as friends.

"Why have you come here?" Jonathan asks, stroking a hand over Horsea's head.

*We were summoned by her voice. Others were summoned as well. Not all by Eleven's voice but by...others.*

"How many?" Will asks quietly.

*Thousands.*

"And will all of them..." Dustin screws up his face, trying to remember. "Will all of them bond?"

*No. You must protect and be protected by your Pokémon companion.* His purple eyes flash. *This is only the beginning.*